



The impact of Mobile Legends Game on students' interest in learning and prayer discipline islamic religious education of Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta

Apriansyah Awahab¹, Tumin²

^{1,2}Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia

¹aawahab220403@gmail.com, ²tumin@umy.ac.id

Article Info

Article history:

Received August 11th 2025

Revised September 1st 2025

Accepted September 30th 2025

Keyword:

Mobile Legends; Learning Interest; Prayer Discipline; Students; Phenomenology.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of the Mobile Legends game on learning interest and prayer discipline among Islamic Religious Education students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta. As a highly popular game among students, Mobile Legends not only serves as entertainment but also influences academic and spiritual aspects. Using a qualitative approach with a descriptive phenomenology method, data were collected through in-depth interviews with six active players and participatory observation, both directly and via digital platforms. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, and validity was ensured through triangulation and member checking. The findings reveal that excessive involvement in playing negatively affects learning interest. Students often postpone studying, lose concentration, and experience reduced academic motivation, particularly when striving for higher in-game rankings. Moreover, gaming habits influence prayer discipline; many respondents admitted to delaying or missing prayers due to gameplay. Some expressed guilt and discomfort after neglecting this religious duty. This phenomenon highlights that without strong self-control and effective time management, Mobile Legends can disrupt students' academic performance and spiritual commitments. Therefore, collective awareness is essential to promote wise technology use, ensuring it supports rather than hinders their primary roles as learners and devout individuals.



©2025 Apriansyah Awahab, Tumin. Published by Arka Institute. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

INTRODUCTION

Rapid technological advances, particularly the widespread use of smartphones with internet connectivity, have transformed various aspects of human life, including education, entertainment, and communication (Kumar et al., 2019). While digital technology offers extensive learning opportunities, it also presents challenges, one of which is the rise of online gaming. Mobile Legends: Bang Bang (MLBB), a *Multiplayer Online Battle Arena* (MOBA) game developed by Moonton, has gained immense popularity in Indonesia, attracting players of all ages, particularly university students (Jumana et al., 2023).

Previous research has shown that online gaming can impact students' academic achievement and social behavior. For example, Rizal & Permata (2025) found a decline in learning interest due to prolonged gaming habits, while Kacar & Ayaz-Alkaya (2022) reported a correlation between excessive gaming and decreased social skills. Helwatuazzakiah et al., (2021) emphasized that poor time management in gaming also negatively impacts religious obligations such as prayer. However, most of these studies examined academic or social impacts separately, without considering the dual effects on academic motivation and spiritual discipline in an integrated manner.

The research gap lies in the lack of studies that directly link the intensity of playing Mobile Legends with a decrease in interest in learning as well as prayer discipline, especially in Islamic Religious Education students who are ideally expected to be able to balance academic achievement with religious commitment.

The novelty of this research lies in the use of a qualitative phenomenological approach to capture students' lived experiences in depth, thus illustrating how gaming habits affect time management, learning motivation, and religious observance. Focusing on Islamic Religious Education students at the University of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta provides a unique perspective that combines academic and religious contexts, while offering practical implications for values-based education in the digital age.

Nowadays, rapidly developing technology makes everything easier. In the beginning, before the internet and smartphones were invented, we only had a little time and space to play. The advancement of technology today is also closely related to the advancement of the internet, where the internet and mobile phones are the two most famous subjects in the current digitalization era. One example of the use of technology today is through the use of smartphones with internet connections, where smartphones can be used as a means of supporting educational needs for students. This is because the internet can also be used as a source of learning for students where the internet provides a wider range of information about education and the best place is that the internet itself can be accessed easily according to the wishes of its users (Subroto et al., 2024).

With the advancement of technology in the form of smartphones connected to the internet, it is expected that it can be utilized well by its users, especially in the realm of education where if it can be utilized well, it will be easy for them to find whatever they want related to aspects of life such as education, entertainment, politics, and so on, so that later they can fulfill additional learning obligations that are broader and more detailed that can be used by students. However, it is very difficult to avoid, because usually technology users themselves do not only use the internet as an additional means to support learning, but there are also those who use this internet connection only to play online games (Nawawi et al., 2021)

Online games are a type of game that uses a computer or smartphone that is connected to the internet to be played. With this feature, players or users can play games even though they are not in the same room. Nowadays, playing online games is one type of game that is widely loved by various groups, from young people to adults, or even students (Anggraeni et al., 2021).

But the reality is that currently, the use of online games is rampant and is no longer limited to people of all ages, from children to adults. Evidently, online games are not a new phenomenon in Indonesia. The online game market is one of the largest in Indonesia. Over the past few years, online games have become increasingly popular. This can be seen from the number of internet cafes (warnet) that offer online game services around the clock. If the internet itself is used continuously for things that are not very useful, then it can interfere with the seriousness of learning for students where the time that should be used as a learning support for them is instead used as a means to have fun for something that is not too important for the sustainability of their careers, then this can be a boomerang for students or users because indirectly they will receive and bear the negative impacts themselves due to their lack of policy in utilizing the internet properly.

In line with the development of the era from time to time that is increasingly sophisticated, online games continue to evolve. If previously this online game was only played via PC (personal computer), and now game providers are starting to shift their attention to games that can be accessed via smartphones (Marini et al., 2024). The evolution of games from PC to smartphone can make it easier for online game lovers to play the games they like anywhere and anytime. One of the online games that is currently the most popular and gets one of the highest download ratings in Asia (both on Android and iOS-based smartphones), is Mobile legends: Bang-bang (MLBB). MLBB is a game product that was present first and immediately became a favorite for fans of MOBA (Multiplayer Online Battle Arena) genre games that beat the popularity of other similar MOBA games such as the Arena of Valor and League of Legend moba games (Arif & Aditya, 2022).

MLBB or often known as Mobile Legend Bang Bang is one of the online mobile games that is currently in great demand and is often played, especially among today's teenagers and is one of the most popular games in Asia (Ong et al., 2023). The same is true for the Arena of Valor, League of Legends, and PUBG games, which are also one of the most popular games today. This game can cause addiction in players who are very fanatical about this game, where they are willing to spend hours or even a full day just to play this game. Fans of the Mobile Legend Bang Bang

game usually always pursue the target ranking level starting from the lowest tier rank, namely Warrior, Elite, Master, Granmaster, Epic, Legend, Mytical Roman, Mytical Honor, Mytical Glory and the highest hight tier in the Mobile Legends Bang Bang game, namely Mytical Immortal.

This mobile game, or often known as MLBB, was created by one of the leading game development companies in China named Moonton which is based in the district of Shanghai China. This MOBA genre mobile game was initially released for Android on July 11, 2016 in three countries: China, Indonesia, and Malaysia (Risqi, 2022). Then after a few months from the release of this game which was initially only released for Android users, then precisely on November 9, 2016 Moonton then released the Mobile Legends game IOS version which can also be played for iPhone users. After a few years of the release of this game, and immediately got a lot of fans, especially from among teenagers today, making the Mobile Legends game currently one of the most popular and widely played games in Asia, especially in Indonesia.

According to data from the Google Play Store and App Store, this MOBA genre game has been played for more than ten years. One of the reasons why Mobile Legends is a very popular game in Indonesia is because it has various characters or hero figures, some of which are taken from fictional stories from several countries, one example is the hero character in the mobile legend game from Indonesia, namely Gatot Kaca and Kadita. Gatot Kaca is one of the heroes in the MLBB game who is one of the popular characters in the wayang story in Central Java who is depicted as a brave and mighty knight from Prankgadani. In addition, Gatot Kaca himself is also depicted as a person who has a strong soul and body, even so strong that Gatot Kaca can defeat his enemies easily. In addition to Gatot Kaca, there are also other heroes or characters in the MLBB game from Indonesia named Kadita. The Kadita character itself is inspired by the legend of Nyai Roro Kidul who was originally a beautiful princess who was cursed and then became a queen in the southern sea after gaining power from the ocean. This is what makes this Mobile Legends game one of the most popular games today, because the story of each character or figure is taken from the stories of various countries. In addition, the graphics and animation display of this game are also very good, and the size is not too big so it is not too heavy to play.

Excessive use of online games such as Mobile Legends can have negative impacts on its users. Games that were originally designed as a means of entertainment often cause dependency, where players feel compelled to continue playing in order to gain emotional satisfaction, especially in the form of victory. Grant and Kim call this phenomenon game addiction, which is a condition when someone becomes so fixated on online games that they ignore other activities in real life. As a result, the individual tends to neglect responsibilities and activities in the real world because they are too immersed in the virtual world.

Teenagers who have reached the level of addiction to online games show significant behavioral changes, which can ultimately affect their quality of life (Fitrajaya et al., 2022). Addiction to the Mobile Legends game can trigger various negative impacts, such as spending excessive time playing to forgetting other obligations, one example of which is ignoring prayer.

Prayer is a worship consisting of words and actions that begin with takbiratul ihram and end with greetings. Therefore, the habit of performing prayer must be instilled in students, because with religious training which is a mandatory worship such as prayer, fasting, reading the Qur'an and praying if it is accustomed to students, there will be a feeling to do it. (Kinanti, 2023). Prayer according to the linguistic meaning is du'a. According to the definition of the term, it is a worship that contains certain words and actions which begins with takbir and ends with greetings. Regarding the argument for the obligation to perform prayers, Allah SWT says "so establish prayer and pay zakat and hold fast to (religion) Allah. He is your God, the best of God and the best of helpers". (QS. Al-Hajj: 78)

Teenagers who are addicted to online games tend to have low social skills. They prefer to seek emotional support through online games rather than through direct interaction with others. This indicates a decrease in the need to build social relationships in real life (Monninger et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, according to Al-Adwan et al., (2023), interest in learning is an important factor that influences whether someone will engage in learning activities or avoid them. This interest is closely related to a person's perception and emotional response to the learning process. If an individual has a positive view of learning activities, then he or she will be more motivated

to follow and carry them out optimally. In general, interest can be understood as a form of acceptance of an object or activity that one wants to learn because of a sense of interest in it.

In addition to influencing behavior, online games also have an impact on the emotional condition of teenagers. The use of Mobile Legends is known to trigger emotional disorders, such as being easily angered, feeling offended, getting annoyed quickly, and becoming more emotionally sensitive, including in the use of harsh words (Aulia Tri Utami et al., 2022). In general, there are two types of emotions experienced by online game players, namely positive emotions and negative emotions. Positive emotions include feelings of joy, happiness, calm, and satisfaction. In contrast, negative emotions are characterized by the emergence of feelings of discomfort, frustration, and psychological pressure that can cause conflict or problems in everyday life (Aulia Tri Utami et al., 2022).

From an educational perspective, learning interest is an important psychological factor in supporting academic success. According to Azmi (2020), a person's interest in learning is influenced by two main factors, namely internal and external factors. Internal factors include biological and psychological aspects. Biologically, an individual's physical health condition greatly determines enthusiasm and concentration in learning; health disorders can reduce interest in learning. Psychologically, talent and intelligence play an important role, where talent as a natural ability encourages someone to be more enthusiastic in studying the field of interest, while intelligence influences the ability to understand and absorb new information. Meanwhile, external factors consist of the family, school, and community environments. Family support, especially from parents, is very important in fostering learning motivation, and a conducive family environment also strengthens children's interest in learning. In the school environment, interesting teaching methods and relevant curriculum can increase students' enthusiasm for learning. In addition, the community also has an influence through social activities that support the educational process and the social environment, especially peers, which can significantly shape a person's attitude and enthusiasm for learning (Iskandar et al., 2019).

Therefore, with the existence of several phenomena, this research is very important to be carried out further, because it not only concerns academic performance, but also because it is related to character formation, time management, and digital identity construction among students. Students are agents of social change, and how they navigate today's technological challenges will determine the competitiveness and integrity of future generations. Therefore, understanding the dynamics of playing games from a cultural and educational perspective is crucial. This study focuses on the impact of the Mobile Legends game on students' learning interests and prayer discipline at the University of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta. The study was conducted with a qualitative phenomenological approach to capture students' subjective experiences in managing time, learning motivation, and interest in academics amidst high game playing intensity. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews and participatory observations of students who are active users of Mobile Legends.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative phenomenological method with a descriptive approach that aims to explore how the Mobile Legend game affects the time and interest of students' learning, as well as its impact on their prayer worship. Involvement in online games can interfere with daily routines, including the obligation to perform prayers on time. The subjects of the study consisted of 6 students in the faculty of islamic studies and civilization, Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta who were active users of the Mobile Legends game. The selection of subjects was carried out by purposive sampling with criteria such as students who actively play Mobile Legends and students who were willing to be interviewed and share their experiences. Data were collected through interviews using several methods including: (in-depth interviews) namely interviews conducted in a semi-structured manner to obtain in-depth information about the experiences, views and feelings of students related to the impact of the Mobile Legends game can affect the time and interest of students' learning, and Involvement in online games can interfere with daily routines, including the obligation to perform prayers on time. Each interview will be recorded with the subject's permission first and then recorded for further analysis. The next data collection

method is (Participatory observation), namely collecting data by observing students' social interactions in the context of playing games, both directly and through digital platforms. Data from interviews and observations will be analyzed using thematic analysis techniques where researchers identify the main themes that emerge from the subject's experience. Data validity is guaranteed through triangulation techniques by combining member checking where the interview results will be returned to the subject to ensure that the researcher's interpretation is in accordance with their understanding.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research result

The Impact of Mobile Legends Games on Students' Interest in Learning

This study revealed that the high frequency of playing Mobile Legends games has a significant influence on the decline in interest in learning among students. The informants, consisting of active students who use this game, generally said that playing activities that are too intense have an impact on various aspects of their academic activities. Starting from disrupting study schedules, decreasing focus during lectures, to weakening the drive to complete academic tasks. Playing activities that should be a means of entertainment have actually shifted to become the main activity that takes up time, even often shifting learning priorities.

In addition, many of the informants admitted that when they were busy playing, especially in game modes that required high concentration such as push rank, they felt emotionally attached. The feeling of being challenged to win and maintain the device made them reluctant to stop playing, even though it was study time. As a result, feelings of laziness arose to return to studying, difficulty concentrating, and even disruption of thought patterns that should focus on academic achievement. This condition was exacerbated by emotional disturbances such as frustration when losing, which ultimately reduced motivation and enthusiasm for learning.

This phenomenon reflects a shift in learning behavior, where free time that should be used for academic self-development is instead spent in a competitive and addictive virtual world. Therefore, student involvement in online games such as Mobile Legends cannot be underestimated, because the impact is not only temporary, but has the potential to reduce academic quality continuously if not controlled properly.

As revealed through the experience felt by 6 students of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta in the faculty of islamic studies and civilization such as ZA, SA, ND, AP, AB and FF who have difficulty balancing study time and playing mobile legends. As felt by student ZA who is one of the students in the faculty of islamic studies and civilization at Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta.

ZA revealed that after intense playing, his study routine became chaotic:

"Before playing Mobile Legends, my study routine was still pretty good, organized. Then after playing Mobile Legends, it got a bit messy, chaotic, my sleep schedule was messed up, and if there was a morning lecture, I usually didn't go because I fell asleep, which was caused by not sleeping the night before because I kept playing games. In addition, my GPA has also dropped, which was initially good at 3.4, but now it has dropped to 3.1. Maybe one of the reasons is because I keep playing games too much, bro." (Interview, June 28, 2025)

Meanwhile, SA also experienced something similar:

"I once postponed my work, whether it was my college assignments, yes, because I was having fun pushing rank with my friends, which ended up making me stay up all night. From night to morning pushing rank, so I didn't attend my usual class schedule at 7 am, bro. Everything became chaotic because of playing this game, bro" (Interview, June 28, 2025)

ND admitted that he had lost his enthusiasm for studying due to focusing too much on games:

"I think there are more negatives, because it reduces the enthusiasm for learning. Because I think we as players of the game are willing to spend hours to be able to play the game, I even once neglected my academic responsibilities such as not doing my college assignments

because I was so engrossed in playing the game that I forgot the time. There are no positives, it's just to please myself" (Interview June 28, 2025)

Meanwhile, AP said that games also have an emotional impact on the learning process:

"If I've been playing games for too long, sometimes I feel stressed. Especially if I lose streak five times, because usually we meet an unclear team that can't play plus there are friends who deliberately troll in the game, sometimes I get emotional about it, to the point that I once threw my cellphone because my emotions were uncontrolled. Well, for example, after I played the game and I tried to learn, I was definitely very angry, it really affected us because we couldn't focus on doing it because we usually remembered the mobile legend game, how could I lose. Maybe it's like that, bro." (Interview June 30, 2025)

Even though there are also students like AB who say they are able to manage their time, they still feel the impact on their enthusiasm for studying:

"Regarding the spirit of learning, in my opinion, maybe there is a little negative, because if we are too busy playing games, I usually often miss study time to do assignments from lecturers, usually I often postpone assignments until the submission time is close before I do them. Even though I still do the assignments, I usually play the game first to chase the highest rank and then do the assignments. In a position like that, sometimes when the time comes to study and do my assignments, I sometimes complain because the assignment deadline is so fast, maybe because I am too busy playing the game until the time doesn't feel very fast." (Interview June 30, 2025)

Apart from that, FF also explained that the Mobile Legends game did not have much influence on his interest in learning.

FF revealed that:

"I usually play mobile legends games only twice or three times a day, sir, although by playing the game I feel undisturbed, this is because I can manage my time between studying and playing my games. Although I don't feel disturbed, I also realize that playing mobile legend games can affect my focus, especially after playing for a long time. I admit that sometimes the feeling of laziness to study often appears after playing games. However, I still try to maintain a balance between playing games and studying."

In general, students admit that the Mobile Legends game provides its own entertainment that can reduce boredom and stress due to lecture activities. However, they also realize that if the intensity of playing is not limited and not balanced with good time management, then this habit can interfere with learning priorities. Interest in this game often makes them delay or even ignore academic activities, especially when they are focused on pursuing devices in the game. As a result, the enthusiasm for learning decreases, concentration during learning is disturbed, and college assignments are neglected. This phenomenon shows that although games can be a positive means of recreation, if not managed wisely, they can actually have a negative impact on students' academic achievement.

The Impact of Mobile Legends Game on Students' Prayer Discipline

Playing Mobile Legends has a significant impact on students' discipline in performing prayer. Based on the interview results, most informants indicated that playing games is often the main trigger for delaying prayer times. Although they basically understand that prayer is an obligation that should not be abandoned, the reality in the field shows that when they are in the game, especially in competitive modes such as rank matches, they are reluctant to leave the game in the middle of the road. This is due to the game mechanism that requires full commitment from players during the match, which on average takes up to 30 minutes or more. As a result, when the call to prayer sounds or prayer time has arrived, most of them choose to finish the game first rather than immediately performing worship.

This condition indicates an internal conflict between spiritual commitment and worldly

pleasures offered by the game. Not a few of the players eventually experience feelings of guilt, anxiety, and inner discomfort after realizing that they have delayed or even missed prayer. These feelings arise from the awareness that worship is the main foundation in a Muslim's life, and putting prayer second for the sake of the game indicates an imbalance in life priorities. Even some students stated that after playing for a long time and realizing that they had neglected prayer, they felt their hearts became restless, anxious, and felt a loss of spiritual peace. This shows that the habit of playing games intensely can erode spiritual sensitivity if it is not accompanied by time awareness and the ability to manage activities wisely.

The impact of playing Mobile Legends is also strongly felt in the aspect of prayer discipline. Students realize the importance of prayer as an obligation, but in practice they often postpone it because they are involved in the game. This game has a highly competitive nature that makes players reluctant to leave the game in the middle of the road, even when prayer time has arrived. In addition to causing delays in worship, several informants also admitted to feeling guilty and anxious when they neglected to perform prayers on time. As revealed through the experiences felt by 6 students of the University of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta in the faculty of Islamic studies and civilization such as ZA, SA, ND, AP, AB and FF

ZA explained,

"If you delay praying, it usually happens often, sir, if you accidentally press it in the lobby to start the rank mode game, it might delay my prayer time, even the delay can be up to 30 minutes or even more depending on how fast or slow the game is finished, because usually each game can take 20 minutes. However, if the game is finished, then I perform my prayer, sir. (Interview, June 28, 2025)

In addition, SA also added,

"I once neglected to pray when I was too crazy to really enjoy the Mobile Legends game until I forgot the time. This has happened to me often, sir, maybe because I was too busy playing the game, plus my friend often invited me to play continuously until I forgot the time, so that after the game was over I felt like I had a feeling of regret, anxiety, and an uneasy heart, sir. When I played the game before praying "(Interview June 28, 2025)

ND also experienced the same thing:

"If I've been playing games since one in the afternoon, while in that position I haven't prayed Dzuhur, then I usually play three games, because three games usually last until two in the afternoon. Things like that usually make me miss the time for Dzuhur prayer." (Interview June 28, 2025)

Meanwhile, AP is trying to create a personal solution:

"When it's close to prayer time, it's better not to play first. Because the Mobile Legends game can take 30 minutes. So 15 minutes before the call to prayer, I stop playing first. Later after praying, I usually continue playing the game again because the principle is to prioritize prayer over games" (Interview June 30, 2025)

AB admitted that he often postponed prayers but still tried not to miss them:

"Yes, maybe when we play games and hear the call to prayer, people usually continue playing before praying, but I play games long before prayer time." (Interview, June 30, 2025)

FF expressed feelings of discomfort when leaving prayer:

"If I leave my prayer, my life will feel restless, sir. It will seem like there will be a lot of problems. Then if we want to do anything, if we leave our prayer, it seems like there will always be obstacles, sir." (Interview, June 30, 2025)

These findings indicate that excessive Mobile Legends gaming activities without good time control can disrupt students' regularity in carrying out obligatory worship such as prayer. When the game becomes the main priority, prayer times that should be carried out on time are

often shifted, even missed. This not only has an impact on the routine aspect of worship, but also reflects the decline in students' spiritual awareness in placing religious obligations as a priority. This condition is increasingly complex when students feel pushed by their friends who are also actively playing, causing difficulties in maintaining a commitment to worship consistently. Thus, it can be concluded that minimal self-control in playing games risks weakening spiritual discipline and religious values that should be maintained in everyday life, especially by students in the faculty of Islamic studies and civilization.

Discussion

The Impact of Mobile Legends Games on Students' Interest in Learning

Based on the research findings, it can be seen that intensive Mobile Legends playing activities have a negative impact on students' interest in learning. This shows that the interest in learning, which should be an internal drive to actively involve themselves in the learning process, has decreased due to excessive interest in gaming activities. In accordance with Zhang (2025), interest in learning is greatly influenced by an individual's perception and emotional response to academic activities. When the perception of learning is no longer interesting or less competitive than digital entertainment such as games, then interest in learning tends to decrease.

Psychologically, the Mobile Legends game provides instant gratification that affects focus and concentration. The competitive features in this game trigger the urge to keep playing, even setting aside study time. This is in line with the theory put forward by Kaya & Sarpkaya (2025), that game addiction can trigger behavioral changes, such as delaying important activities, decreasing academic motivation, and increasing mental fatigue. Students who initially had a regular study pattern find it difficult to manage their time and are often trapped in a prolonged cycle of playing.

From the external side, factors of friendship environment and digital lifestyle also strengthen this tendency. According to Zahrah et al., (2025), the social environment, including peer influence, greatly influences an individual's interest in learning. When the friendship environment spends more time playing games, new habits will form that shift academic orientation towards digital entertainment. If it is not balanced with strengthening academic values from the campus environment and family, the risk of declining learning performance will be even greater.

The Impact of Mobile Legends Game on Students' Prayer Discipline

Another very striking impact of the habit of playing Mobile Legends is the disruption of student discipline in performing prayers. Prayer as a primary obligation in Islam requires time commitment and consistency in implementation. However, student involvement in competitive online games has led to a tendency to postpone or even skip prayers in order to complete the game. This phenomenon reflects spiritual disorientation, where digital entertainment shifts the priority of religious values.

The theory put forward by Kinanti (2023) emphasizes that the habit of worship must be instilled through practice and habituation from an early age so that it grows into awareness. However, in this case, control over prayer times weakens as dependence on games increases. This condition is exacerbated by the game's mechanics that require full focus during the game, so players tend to postpone other activities that require attention, including prayer.

This situation is also related to the concept of game addiction as explained by Grant and Kim in the game addiction theory, namely a condition where players feel emotionally and psychologically attached to the game so that they ignore real responsibilities outside the digital world (Cuerdo et al., 2024). In the context of student spirituality, this is a serious alarm because it shows a shift in values from an orientation towards the afterlife to temporary worldly pleasures.

On the other hand, Laksono et al. (2022) revealed that teenagers or college students who are addicted to games tend to show a decline in social and spiritual skills. When college students spend more time in cyberspace, not only are social aspects disrupted, but spiritual commitments are also eroded. Delaying worship is not only a matter of time, but also reflects weak spiritual discipline and a lack of awareness of the life priorities that should be carried out by a Muslim.

Overall Impact of Mobile Legends

The students' attachment to the Mobile Legends game not only affects the cognitive aspect in the learning process, but also touches the affective and spiritual aspects. When the focus of the mind and emotions is directed at the game, the capacity to absorb academic information decreases. This reduces the effectiveness of the learning process because divided attention makes students unable to optimally understand the lecture material.

Moreover, emotional involvement in competitive games like Mobile Legends creates fluctuating psychological dynamics. Feelings of joy when winning or frustration when losing can continue to be carried over to non-game activities, including lectures and worship. As a result, students' mental stability is disturbed so that their interest in learning and enthusiasm for worship are increasingly weakened.

This condition shows how modern digital games are not only a medium of entertainment, but also able to influence the daily life and mindset of its users. Mobile Legends with its reward system creates a kind of "dependency loop", where players are continuously encouraged to return to play in order to achieve a higher ranking or win a particular match. This encouragement often makes students willing to sacrifice study time or worship.

As conveyed by Ayumi et al., (2019), multitasking behavior in a digital environment often reduces the quality of all activities carried out. Students who try to balance playing games with studying and worship often fail to maintain the quality of both. Finally, they experience a decline in academic achievement and spiritual discipline at the same time.

The transition from learning interest to gaming addiction usually happens slowly but consistently. Initially it is just a means of entertainment in free time, but over time it becomes an emotional need and daily routine. When this happens without any control or self-supervision, gaming begins to dominate the priorities of students' lives, replacing the importance of studying and worship.

This tendency is exacerbated by the addictive nature of team-based games like Mobile Legends that require real-time engagement. Students feel compelled to stay online for fear of letting their team down. In many cases, this causes players to postpone other activities, including prayer, because they do not want to leave the ongoing match.

This condition shows a shift in values in the lives of students, where instant gratification and digital entertainment are prioritized over primary responsibilities as students and Muslims. This shows the importance of educational intervention from educational institutions and families to rebuild awareness of the importance of life balance.

It should be emphasized that these negative impacts are not always absolute. Some students are able to use games as a means of healthy entertainment with good time management. However, in many cases, the lack of self-control is the main root of the problem that makes games a threat to students' academic and spiritual performance.

Internal factors such as time management, learning motivation, and religious awareness greatly determine how students interact with entertainment technology. When students have strong resilience and awareness of life priorities, gaming will not be a distraction, but rather just an occasional recreational activity.

However, when self-resilience is weak, games like Mobile Legends turn into the main source of distraction that damages the rhythm of productive life. This shows the importance of character building in the campus environment, so that students have the ability to manage time wisely and set a balanced scale of priorities.

The chain effect of this game addiction also creates its own social pressure. Students who do not play often feel left out of society. On the other hand, those who play will be more accepted in their group, even though they have to sacrifice study and worship time. This situation creates a dilemma between social needs and personal responsibility.

In the context of religiosity, the challenge becomes even greater. Commitment to worship requires not only intention, but also consistency of action. When daily routines are filled with virtual world activities, spiritual moments such as prayer are vulnerable to being neglected. This shows that the influence of games is not only technical, but also ideological—shifting the orientation of life from the transcendental to the worldly.

This pattern indicates the need for integration of technology education and character

education in the campus learning system. Students need to be given a critical understanding that technology is not an enemy, but a tool that must be managed wisely. This is where the role of lecturers, student organizations, and the spiritual environment of the campus is important.

Efforts to build collective awareness are also important steps. An environment that supports a balance between entertainment, academics, and spirituality will help students form positive habits. For example, a campus community that practices congregational prayer and has study time rules can be a counterbalance to a digital culture that leads to individualism.

Thus, the impact of the Mobile Legends game on students' interest in learning and prayer discipline are two aspects that are closely related. When interest in learning decreases due to game addiction, spiritual discipline also weakens because there is no balance between the real world and the virtual world. This is an important signal for all parties to take a more comprehensive preventive and solution-oriented approach.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of a study conducted on six active students who use the Mobile Legends game at the Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta, it can be concluded that excessive involvement in this game has a significant negative impact on two main aspects of student life, namely interest in learning and discipline in performing prayer. In the academic aspect, students tend to experience decreased motivation to learn, impaired focus, and neglect of college assignments because of the large amount of time spent playing, especially when chasing rankings or "push rank".

Meanwhile, from a spiritual perspective, the habit of playing games intensively also has an impact on discipline in performing prayer. Many students admit to delaying or even skipping prayer times in order to complete the game. This condition causes inner conflict, in the form of guilt and restlessness because they put religious obligations second. This phenomenon shows that online games such as Mobile Legends can shift students' priority scale, from academic obligations and worship to virtual world entertainment, if not accompanied by good self-control and time management.

This study emphasizes the importance of collective awareness from students, lecturers, and the campus environment to balance the use of technology with academic and spiritual responsibilities. Digital games should be managed as a means of healthy recreation, not as a major source of disruption in the process of character formation and religiosity of students. An educational approach, character building, and strengthening of religious and academic values are needed to encourage students to remain able to maintain their commitment as Muslim students and individuals amidst the rapid flow of digitalization of entertainment.

REFERENCES

- Al-Adwan, A. S., Li, N., Al-Adwan, A., Abbasi, G. A., Albelbisi, N. A., & Habibi, A. (2023). Extending the technology acceptance model (TAM) to Predict University Students' intentions to use metaverse-based learning platforms. *Education and Information Technologies*, 28(11), 15381–15413. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10639-023-11816-3>
- Anggraeni, V., Zuhira, Z. A., & Setyawan, A. (2021). Pengaruh Mobile Legends Terhadap Minat Dan Semangat Belajar Mahasiswa Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Angkatan 2021 Universitas Trunojoyo Madura. *EduCurio: Education Curiosity*, 1(1), 181–189. <https://yptb.org/index.php/educurio/article/view/102>
- Arif, M., & Aditya, S. (2022). Dampak Perilaku Komunikasi Pemain Game Mobile Legends Pada Mahasiswa Universitas Negeri Padang. *Journal of Intercultural Communication and Society*, 1(01), 31–45. <https://journal.rc-communication.com/index.php/JICS/article/view/30>
- Aulia Tri Utami, Bandarsyah, D., & Sulaeman, S. (2022). Dampak Game Mobile Legends Terhadap Pola Interaksi Sosial Siswa Kelas V di Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Educatio FKIP UNMA*, 8(3), 899–907. <https://doi.org/10.31949/educatio.v8i3.2710>
- Ayumi, E., Zulkarnain, I., & Hendra, Y. (2019). The relationship of online games addiction with teaching social skills in the communication science students of State Islamic University of North Sumatera. *Jurnal Tarbiyah*, 26(2). <https://doi.org/10.30829/tar.v26i2.519>

- Azmi, F. D. I. (2020). *Pengaruh game online terhadap minat belajar pendidikan agama islam di mts al-ikhlas way jepara lampung timur skripsi*. 2507(February), 1–9. <https://repository.radenintan.ac.id/12292/>
- Cuerdo, M., Baskaran, D., & Melcer, E. (2024). Exploring how emotional challenge and affective design in games relates to player reflection. *Proceedings of the 19th International Conference on the Foundations of Digital Games*, 1–12. <https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/3649921.3650023>
- Fitrajaya, R. R., Utomo, I. P., & Handayani, L. (2022). Dampak Kesehatan Akibat Kecanduan Game Online Pada Remaja. *Jurnal Cakrawala Promkes*, 4(2), 102–113. <https://doi.org/10.12928/promkes.v4i2.5651>
- Helwatuazzakiah, H., Haris Zubaidillah, M., & Ahmad Ramadhani, D. (2021). The Effect of online game addiction on punctuality in performing prayers. *Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Learning Innovation and Quality Education*, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3516875.3516915>
- Iskandar, F. R., Hidayat, S., & Ganda, N. (2019). Dampak Permainan Mobile Legend terhadap Motivasi Belajar Siswa Sekolah Dasar. *EduBasic Journal: Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar*, 1(2), 116–122. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ebj.v1i2.26599>
- Jumana, A. A., Umboh, J. G., Wijaya, K. I. K. D., Gunawan, A. A. S., & Saputra, K. E. (2023). The Impact of Playing Multiplayer Online Battle Arena Video Games on the Enhancement of Computational Thinking Skills Among Students in Indonesia. *2023 6th International Conference on Information and Communications Technology (ICOIACT)*, 108–113. <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/10455810/>
- Kacar, D., & Ayaz-Alkaya, S. (2022). The effect of traditional children's games on internet addiction, social skills and stress level. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, 40, 50–55. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0883941722000498>
- Kaya, B., & Sarpkaya, A. (2025). Over-gaming burns me out: The indirect role of academic procrastination between digital game addiction severity and school burnout among adolescents. *School Psychology International*, 01430343251376767. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01430343251376767>
- Kinanti, G. A., & Mavianti, M. (2023). Teknik Pengenalan Bacaan dan Gerakan Shalat pada Anak. *Journal of Education*, 5(3). <https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v5i3.1531>
- Kumar, S., Tiwari, P., & Zymbler, M. (2019). Internet of Things is a revolutionary approach for future technology enhancement: a review. *Journal of Big Data*, 6(1), 1–21. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s40537-019-0268-2>
- Laksono, D. N. H., Subekti, H., & Madyaningrum, E. (2022). Hubungan antara Kecanduan Game Internet dengan Keterampilan Sosial pada Remaja di Kota Yogyakarta. *Jurnal Keperawatan Klinis Dan Komunitas (Clinical and Community Nursing Journal)*, 6(3), 138. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jkkl.68450>
- Marini, M., Farihin, A., Karyono, K., & Kusumadewi, R. A. (2024). Pelatihan Fiqih Sholat: Peningkatan Pelajaran Fiqih Tentang Bacaan dan Praktek Sholat di Mushola Baitus Shibirin Desa Comprang. *SocServe: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, 1(2), 36–43. <https://journals.sanusantara.com/index.php/SocServe/article/view/52>
- Monninger, M., Aggensteiner, P.-M., Pollok, T. M., Kaiser, A., Reinhard, I., Hermann, A., Reichert, M., Ebner-Priemer, U. W., Meyer-Lindenberg, A., & Brandeis, D. (2023). The importance of high quality real-life social interactions during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Scientific Reports*, 13(1), 3675. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-023-30803-9>
- Nawawi, M. I., Pathuddin, H., Syukri, N., Alfidayanti, A., Poppysari, S., Saputri, S., Ramdani, M., Jun, M., & Marsuki, I. (2021). Pengaruh Game Mobile Legends terhadap Minat Belajar Mahasiswa/i Fakultas Sains dan Teknologi UIN Alauddin Makassar. *AL MA'ARIEF: Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial Dan Budaya*, 3(1), 46–54. <https://doi.org/10.35905/almaarief.v3i1.2039>

- Ong, A. K. S., Prasetyo, Y. T., Robas, K. P. E., Persada, S. F., Nadlifatin, R., Matillano, J. S. A., Macababbad, D. C. B., Pabustan, J. R., & Taningco, K. A. C. (2023). Determination of factors influencing the behavioral intention to play “Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang” during the COVID-19 pandemic: Integrating UTAUT2 and system usability scale for a sustainable E-sport business. *Sustainability*, 15(4), 3170. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15043170>
- Risqi, R. A. (2022). Pengaruh Game Mobile Legends Terhadap Minat Belajar Mahasiswa Untidar Angkatan 2020. *JKOMDIS: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi Dan Media Sosial*, 2(3), 381–389. <https://doi.org/10.47233/jkomdis.v2i3.402>
- Rizal, S., & Permata, S. D. (2025). Beyond The Screen: Unpacking The Impact of Excessive Gaming on Student Learning and Well-Being. *Proceedings Series of Educational Studies*, 871–882. <https://conference.um.ac.id/index.php/pses/article/view/10539>
- Subroto, D. E., Dewa, D. M. R. T., & Prayitno, H. (2024). Analysis of School Policy Effectiveness in Anticipating Students’ Use of The Internet and Digitalization in Learning Process. *Jurnal Sistim Informasi Dan Teknologi*, 96–100. <https://doi.org/10.60083/jsisfotek.v6i2.366>
- Zahrah, F., Vhalery, R., & Sefudin, A. (2025). The Influence of Peer Environment on Students’ Interest in Pursuing Higher Education among 12th-Grade Students of the Accounting and Financial Institution Department at SMK Negeri 25 Jakarta. *JOURNAL OF EDUCATION: DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW (JEDAR)*, 2(01), 10–15. <https://pub.ruangrosadi.com/jurnal-ilmiah/index.php/jedar/article/view/69>
- Zhang, Y. (2025). Impact of arts activities on psychological well-being: Emotional intelligence as mediator and perceived stress as moderator. *Acta Psychologica*, 254, 104865. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0001691825001787>